A Letter from Mr. Nich. Waite *Merchant of* London, *to* Dr. Rob. Plot; *concerning ſome* Incombuſtible Cloth, *lately expoſed to the Fire before the* Royal Society.

Sir,

THE great reſpect and honour I bear to the learned and ingenious Gentlemen of the *Royal Society*, prevailed with me, within few days after my arrival in this *City*, to expoſe to their ſight & examination a piece of of *LinnenCloth*, which by their experiment conſumed not in the *fire*: and you being then deſirous I would give a ſhort *narrative* of what *Subſtance*, and in what *parts* it is ſaid to be made; I here ſend you the ſame account I received of it, from one *Conco*, a natural *Chineſe*, reſident in the *City* of *Batavia* in the North-Eaſt parts of *India*. Who, by means of *Keay-arear Sukradana* (likewiſe a *Chineſe*, and formerly chief *Cuſtomer* to the old *Sultan* of *Bantam*) did after ſeveral years diligence, procure, from a great *Mandarin* in *Lanquin* (a province of *China*,) near ¾ of a yard of the ſaid *cloth*; and declared that he was credibly informed, that the Princes of *Tartary*, and others adjoyning to them, did uſe it in *burning* their *dead*; and that it was ſaid and believed by them, to be made of the under part of the *root* of a *tree* growing in the Province of *Sutan*; and was ſuppoſed, in like manner, to be made of the *Todda* trees in *India*: and that, of the upper part of the ſaid *root*, near the ſurface of the ground, was made a finer ſort, which in three or four times burning I have ſeen diminiſh almoſt half: They report alſo, that out of the ſaid *tree* there diſtills a *liquor*, which not conſuming, is uſed with a *Wiek* made of the

ſame material with the *cloth*, to burn in their *Temples* to poſterity. This, Sr, is the true *relation* I received of the nature and ſubſtance of it from the *Chineſe* above mention'd; if as a *vegetable* it agree not with your Experiments or Judgment, your own commands obligeing me to render you this *account*, I hope there will not any ill conſtruction be made there of, which is all the Favour is deſired by

London,
Sept. 10*th* 1684.

Your moſt aſſured Humble
Servant NICH. WAITE.

The *Handkerchief* or pattern of this *Incombuſtible Linnen*, which was ſhewn the *Royal Society*, (part whereof is engraven *Fig.* 3.) being meaſured, was found in length 9 Inches, between the *fringe* or *taſſells*; the *fringe* at each end being 3 Inches more; ſo that the whole was juſt a foot in length; and the breadth was juſt ½ a foot.

There were two *proofs* of its reſiſting *fire*, given at *London*: one, before ſome of the Members of the *R. Society*, privatly, *Aug.* 20. 1684; when *Oyl* was permitted to be poured upon it whilſt red hot, to enforce the violence of the fire: before it was put into the *fire* this firſt *trial*, it weighed one ounce, ſix drams, ſixteen grains, and loſt in the burning two drams, five grains.

The ſecond *Experiment* of it was publick before the *Society*, *Nov.* 12 following, when it weighed (as appears by the *Journal* of the *Society*) before it was put into the *fire*, one ounce, three drams, 18 grains. Being put into a clear *Charcoal fire*, it was permitted to continue red hot in it, for ſeveral minutes: when taken out (though red hot) it did not conſume a piece of white *paper*, on which it was layd: it was preſently cool, and upon weigh-

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ing it again, was found to have loſt one dram, 6 grains.

Dec. 3, Mr. *Arthur Bayly*, one of the *Fellows* of the *R. Society*, preſented them with a piece of this *Linnen* in the name of Mr. *Waite*. At the ſame time, the ſame Mr. *Bayly* preſented *Dr. Plot* with another piece of it, which being brought to *Oxford* the *Experiment* was again repeated on it (*Dec.* 16.) it being put into a ſtrong *Charcoal fire* in the *Natural Hiſtory School*, in a full meeting of the *Philoſophical Society* of that *Univerſity*; where after it had continued red hot for ſome conſiderable time, it was taken forth again little altered when cold, ſaving that it ſeemed a little *whiter* and *cleaner* than before it was put in; as appears upon the *Journal* of that *Society*. Concerning which, *Dr. Plot*, being deſired to offer his thoughts, drew up the following *Diſcours*, which was read before the ſaid *Society*, *June* the 23d *An.* 1685.

A Diſcourſe *concerning the* Incombuſtible Cloth *above mentioned*; *Addreſs'd in a* Letter *to Mr.* Arthur Bayly *Merchant, and* Fellow *of the* R. Society; *and to Mr.* Nicholas Waite, *Merchant of* London; *by* Rob. Plot. *LL. D.*

Worthy Gentlemen.

THE Hiſtorical account of the *incombuſtible Linnen Cloth* above mention'd, being ſent me by the *one* of You; and a noble preſent made me of *part* of it by the *other*; with a deſire from *both*, that I would ſearch the old *Authors* and ſee how agreeable their *relations* are to *this*; give you *Both* a juſt right to the following Diſcourſe: which I deſire you would believe I addreſs to you, not ſo much out of *Complement*, as true *gratitude* for ſo valuable

Fig. 1.

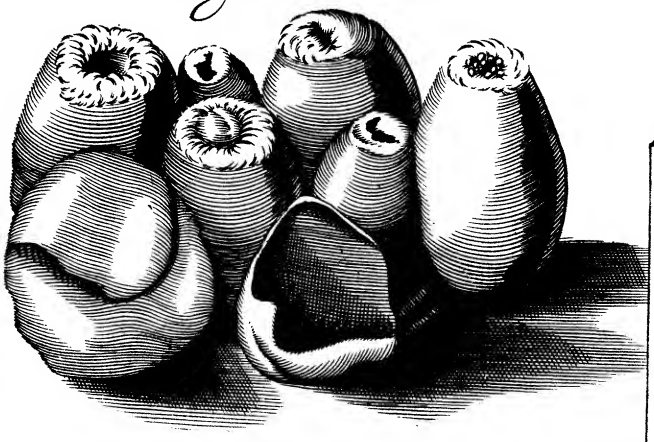

Fig. 2.

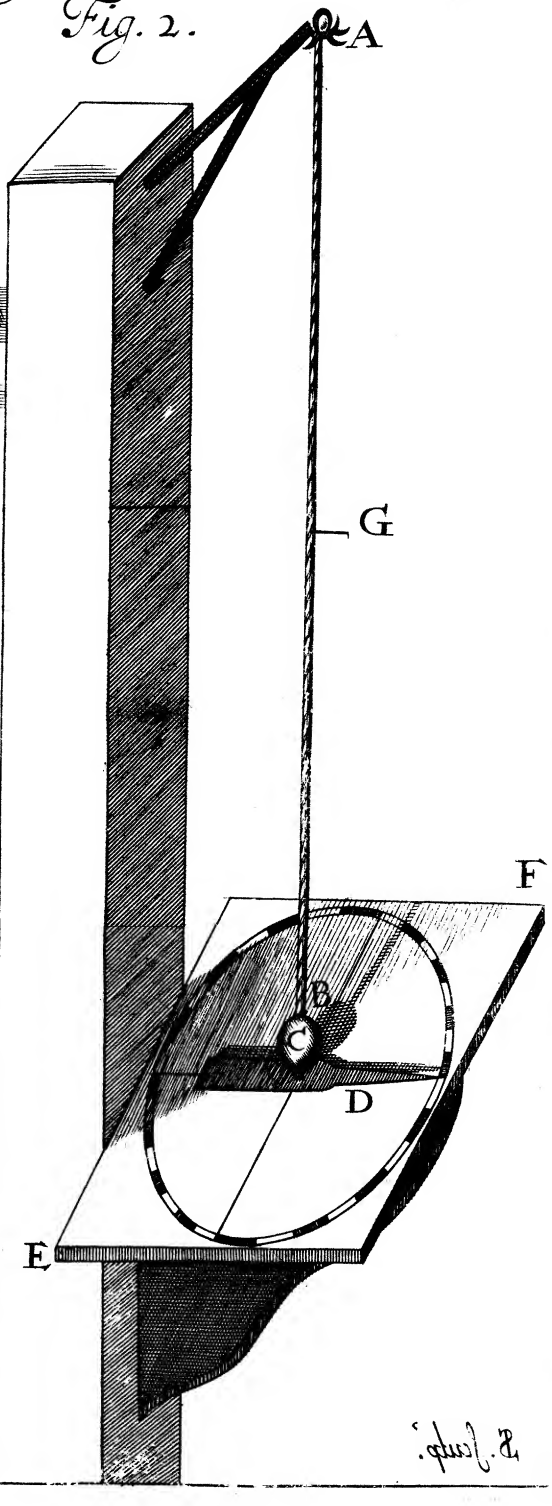
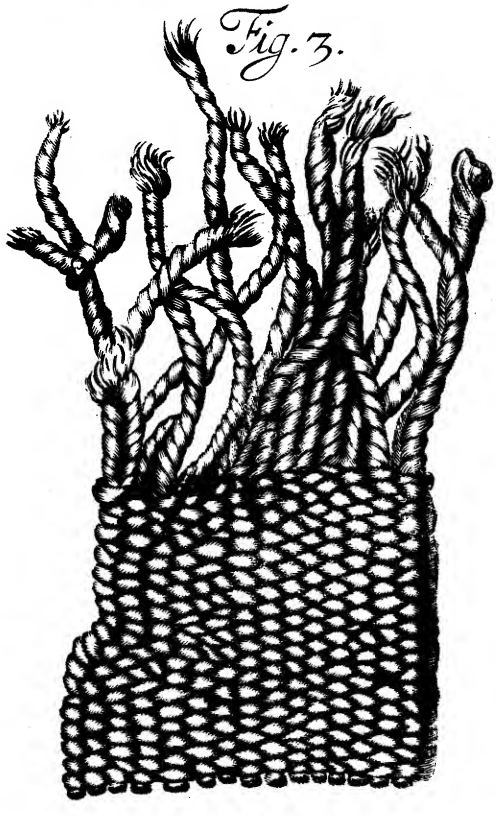
Fig. 3.